DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 303 010 EC 211 898

AUTHOR Dunaway, Avtar; Klein, Marsha Dunn
TITLE Bathing Techniques for Children Who Have Cerebral Palsy.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-88450-204-X
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 18p.
AVAILABLE FROM Communication Skill Builders, Therapy Skill Builders, 3830 E. Bellevue, P.O. Box 42050, Tucson, AZ 85733 ($12.50 for 10, quantity discount available, add 10% for postage and handling; catalog no. 7474-Y).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adaptive Behavior (of Disabled); *Assistive Devices (for Disabled); *Cerebral Palsy; *Cleaning; *Human Body; Hygiene; Parent Participation; Parent Responsibility; *Safety; *Self Care Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Baths

ABSTRACT

Helpful techniques are offered for making bathtime easier, safer, and more fun for children who have cerebral palsy. Safety in the bathtub is stressed, both for the child who needs protection from slippery surfaces and extreme water temperature, and for the caregiver who must lift and carry the child without causing injury to the lower back. Methods are suggested for preparing hypertonic, hypotonic, and tactilely sensitive children for a bath. Ideas are also presented for dealing with children who resist bathing, washing tight hands and legs, drying, and making bathtime fun. A list of bathing equipment available commercially, including bath chairs and baby bathtubs, is included. Products are also described that can make children more independent at bathtime, such as bath mittens, extended sponges, and soap on a rope. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Bathing Techniques

for children who have cerebral palsy

Avtar Dunaway, O.T.R.
Marsha Dunn Klein, M.Ed., O.T.R.
Illustrations by Avtar Dunaway

ED303010

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Savitt

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Catalog No. 7474

About the Authors

Avtar Dunaway is a registered occupational therapist who has worked in the area of pediatric rehabilitation since 1975. She uses her illustrations to present therapeutic treatment ideas to families of handicapped children.

Marsha Dunn Klein is a registered occupational therapist. She has a Master's degree in Education with an emphasis on special education for physically handicapped students. She is certified in Pediatric Neurodevelopmental Therapy techniques.

© 1988 by

Therapy Skill Builders
A division of
Communication Skill Builders
3830 E. Bellevue/P.O. Box 42050
Tucson, Arizona 85733/(602) 323-7500

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the Publisher.

ISBN 0-88450-204-X Catalog No. 7474

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in the United States of America

Bathing Techniques
for children who have cerebral palsy

Bathtime is an excellent time for parents and children to talk and play together. But when children have neuromuscular difficulties, bathtime can present problems. How should these children be held so they are the most relaxed? How can they be bathed so the parent's own back is the most comfortable?

A few hints can help make bathtime easier, safer, and more fun! Talk about these ideas with your child's physician and therapist.

Safety in the Bathtub

Bathtubs have slick surfaces. To avoid slipping, put nonskid bathing strips on the tub floor and side walls, or use several nonskid bath mats. Strips and mats are sold in most department stores.

Faucets can be dangerous for children who are not yet well balanced in the tub. Protect little heads from unnecessary bumps by purchasing a spout cover. Most baby stores carry this item.

It is important to check water temperature at bathtime. Water that is too hot can burn sensitive skin. Water that is too cold *or* too hot can cause spastic or hypertonic children to increase muscle tone. When their muscles tighten, it is difficult for these children to relax, and it is hard to hold them safely. Be sure to check the water temperature before placing your child in the water, and don't let the child play with the hot or cold water faucets.

Children will try to drink anything within their reach—and most children don't complain about the taste of soap until they have swallowed a mouthful! Keep liquid soap and decorator soaps out of reach.

Never leave your child alone in the bathtub. No matter how independent your child becomes, you must plan your time so you can be in the bathroom during bathtime. If your child is stable in the tub, you can use this time creatively. Some parents fold clothes while sitting next to the tub, and other parents work on their shopping lists or read to their child.

Lifting and Carrying Your Child

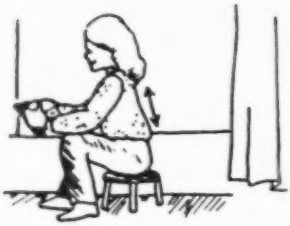
Parents whose first concern is for their child's safety often forget to protect their *own* safety. Lifting your child in and out of the tub can be stressful—and even dangerous—for your back if you do not use proper techniques.

This position is extremely hard on your back. The small muscles of your lower back are doing the work that your wider, stronger leg muscles should do. Whenever possible, lift with your legs—not your back!

Hold the child close to you, so you do the work with your arm and chest—not your back!

Lower the child into the tub by bending your legs—not by leaning over the edge.

Many parents prefer the half-kneel position. It is easy to move in and out of this position, and low back stress is decreased.



Use a short stool to prevent the strain of constantly leaning over the bathtub. Be sure the stool is slightly lower than the tub.

Preparing the Area

Before your child enters the bathtub:

Clear the working area of unnecessary objects.

Collect supplies—soaps, towels, washcloths, plastic cups, and toys.

Unplug the telephone.

Fill the tub and check the water temperature. Use a bathtub thermometer, if you have one. (They are sold in most baby stores.)

Preparing the Child

After the bath area is prepared, it is time to prepare the child. Let your child know it is bathtime. Stick to a routine, so the child will know what to expect next. This reduces anxiety and helps the child feel more comfortable.

Hypertonic Children

Children who have increased muscle tone need to be *relaxed* before bathtime. Move your child slowly and evenly in a rotated or flexed fashion, or walk with the child in one of these positions, rocking gently and smoothly until the child is relaxed. It also may help to flex the child's body, bending the hips and knees and tucking the chin.

Throughout the bath, use slow, even moves. Tell your child what you are going to do next.

Rotated Carry *Elongation Carry* *Flexed Position*

These positions are helpful for some children. Talk with your physician and therapist about the best position for *your* child.

Hypotonic Children

Children who have low or floppy muscle tone also need special help. They need to have their muscle tone *increased* before and during bathtime.

To increase muscle tone, try bouncing your child on the bed. Support the child's upper trunk while you bounce. If your child's head is too difficult to control, or if your child has back problems, talk with your therapist before trying this activity.

If your physician approves, you can use slightly cooler bath water. Brisk, uneven washing or patting with a washcloth also can help keep the child's muscle tone tightened.

Hypotonic children, whose muscles are floppy, can easily slip down into the water. It helps to keep a thin towel or cut-up sheet around these children, particularly while lifting them in or out of the bathtub.

You may want to try these two holding patterns for your hypotonic baby. In both of these positions, the child's head is controlled while you hold a leg or arm close to your body for extra safety.

Tactilely Sensitive Children

Some children have trouble with different types of touch. Even bath water may be too much for them. It sometimes helps to swaddle these children before and during the bath to help them feel safely in control. You can unwrap one part of the body at a time, bathe it, and then carefully rewrap the child.

Wearing a T-shirt can be helpful for a child who has a hard time handling splashes of water on the skin.

Warmer water can calm a sensitive child—but be sure the temperature is not *too* warm!

Children Who Resist Bathing

Dealing with a child who hates bathtime can be a challenge! To make bathtime fun for both you and your child, set aside a few minutes to let your child play in the water. Save a group of special toys to be played with only at bathtime. Empty plastic bottles and measuring cups are fun to play with in the tub!

Finger painting with shaving cream on bathtub walls can make some children eagerly volunteer for bathtime. Spray the shaving cream along the sides and bottom of the tub. When drawing is done, clean both child and tub.

Soap paints and soap crayons are fun to use. Place them on hard-to-wash body parts, and wash them off easily before they dry.

Bathing Hints

It may help to wash your child from trunk to shoulders and hips, then outward toward fingers and toes.

Washing Tight Hands

To wash a tightly fisted hand:

First, gently push the wrist down as you turn the entire arm outward.

Then slip your thumb between the child's thumb and index finger. Be sure to keep the hand in a palm-up position.

Do not try to pry the fingers open. Pulling makes the fingers tighten even more.

Washing Tight Legs

To wash between tightly crossed legs:

First, rotate legs outward, and then bend the hips. Be sure to control the child at the knees – not below the knees.

Now you can easily wash between your child's tight legs.

Avoid pulling the legs apart at the ankles. This makes the legs tighter and places stress on the leg bones.

Drying Hints

Try laying a towel on a surface and playing games with the towel to dry the child. A firm, even touch usually is easier for children to handle.

Some children make the change from tub to air best when they are tightly wrapped in a towel.

Try slipping a terrycloth robe on a child who can't tolerate being dried.

Making Bathtime Funtime

Children like to help with bathing to the best of their abilities. They like to try to wash themselves or raise the body part to be washed next. Talk about what you are doing, and name the child's body parts as you wash them. Play together with suction cup toys and float toys, or toys that are dangling around your neck or wrist.

Use this opportunity for one-to-one interaction with your child. Or let brother or sister be a bathtime entertainer for a group bath!

Bathing Equipment

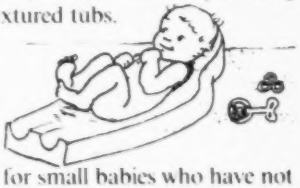
This section will give you an idea of some types of bathing equipment that are available commercially. See page 13 for a list of manufacturers and some distributors of these items.

This is by no means a complete listing of every item you can buy. Many parents and therapists make their own bathing items from foam, PVC pipe, and mesh, using some of the ideas shown here.

A word of caution: There is no bath chair made that is entirely slip-proof. **Never** leave your child in a bath chair unattended!

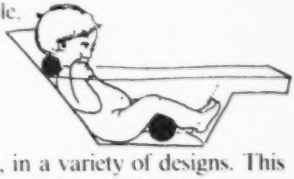
It's a good idea to try someone else's bath chair before buying your own. They are expensive, and you will want to be sure the chair you buy will fit your needs.

Suction cups (a great invention!) are used on many bathing items. They stick best to untextured tubs.



Bath Aid
by A-Plus

This type of bath aid is useful for small babies who have not yet developed head and trunk control. It is made of sponge rubber, and it can be used in the sink or tub or for positioning your child on the changing table.



Infant Tub
by Fisher-Price

Many baby tubs are available, in a variety of designs. This one, made by Fisher-Price, has a skid-proof back to reduce sliding. It can be used in large sinks, on the counter, and in the bathtub. This tub can be purchased in baby shops and department stores.

Notice the towel or washcloth rolls at the baby's neck and knees, to keep the baby in a flexed position.

Nursery Need
by Sanitoy Co.

Larger children can sit in this type of tub and hold the sides for support. The tub can be placed in large sinks or in the bathtub, or it can be used on the counter.

Tubby
by Sassi

Blow-up tubs are excellent for "collecting" a child in a flexed position. These tubs can be used on the counter, in the sink, or in the bathtub.

Get in the bathtub with the baby, or let an older brother or sister bathe with the child. Children who have low muscle tone can be held around the trunk for extra support. Separate the legs by straddling the child over your leg.

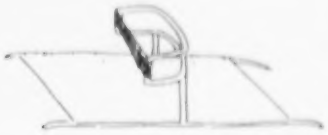
Use soap-on-a-rope, and keep bath toys on a yarn necklace around your neck for your child to play with. It's a good idea to have a helper available to hand you towels or take the child from you as you get out of the bathtub.

Safety Horse
by Century Products, Inc.

The Safety Horse is helpful for toddlers who are learning to sit and right themselves. It also is good for keeping tight legs separated. Trunk support can be removed as the child develops better sitting ability. Towel rolls can be added at the sides for additional support, as needed.

The Baby Sitter
by A-Plus

The Baby Sitter is designed for children who have moderate sitting ability and good head control. It provides just enough support for those children who need "a little extra." Caution: It is made for small children, and will tip if a child is too heavy.



Bath Ring Support

A ring support can be used with some hypotonic children who need extra support for the upper trunk. It also is useful for children who have mild leg and hip tightness that causes their bottoms to slide out from under them. This bath ring support is well made and does not tip over. It can be ordered from J. A. Preston Corp.

Inner tube

A small inner tube may give extra support and confidence to a child at bathtime. Small swimming tubes can be purchased at toy and department stores, and tire inner tubes are available at auto supply stores and garages.

Some therapists recommend crossing the child's legs tailor-style or flexed in front, to reduce leg and hip tightness. If using this method, do so cautiously — the child can easily tip. Also be careful of scratching the child on the inner tube's air spout.

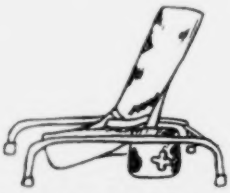
Bath Support Chair

This portable folding chair is useful for hypotonic children who need trunk and head support. It can be used not only for bathing but also for feeding, resting, or play.

The seat is made of nylon mesh, with an adjustable back and arms and suction cups on the frame. It is available in two sizes and can hold an individual up to 175 pounds.

CAUTION: This chair is not recommended for children who have a great deal of vigorous movement.

This chair may be ordered from Fred Sammons, Inc.



Adjustable Bath Seat

This portable bath seat is useful for children who have not yet developed head, trunk, or sitting balance.

The supporting surface is made of open polyester knit mesh. The seat can be adjusted to provide a horizontal or downward sloped seat for use in or out of the bathtub. It is designed to hold a child weighing up to 80 pounds.

This bath seat is available from Fred Sammons, Inc.

Child's Bath Seat

This type of portable bath seat is useful for children who need extra head and trunk support or sitting balance. It comes with a seat belt, and an extra chest strap can be added if needed.

This bath seat can be ordered from J. A. Preston Corp.

TLC Chair
by Ortho-Kinetic, Inc.

The TLC Chair is useful for children and adults who have little or no sitting balance or who are difficult to lift. Trunk, waist, and ankle straps add extra support.

This portable chair on wheels is easily pivoted in and out of the bathtub or swimming pool. Its mesh lining makes a comfortable surface that dries quickly. It is available in two sizes.

The TLC Chair is sold by many medical supply companies.

Adaptive Commode/Shower Chair
by Kids Are OK, Ortho-Kinetic, Inc.

This type of chair is designed for use in the shower. Support is given behind the head, along the neck and trunk, and at the hips and ankles while the child or adult is seated upright.

Commode/shower chairs are available at medical supply companies.

Bathtime Independence

Children will let their parents know when they are ready to take on more bathtime responsibility. They may imitate washing movements their parents have used, or rub soap on their head or wipe their tummy with a washcloth.

There are some items available that make bathtime easier.

If your child drops the soap or washcloth often, let the child wear bath mittens. The mittens should fit well and fasten easily to the child's wrist. You can buy them through Fred Sammons, Inc. To make bath mittens, sew a washcloth in a mitten shape and add wrist ties or Velcro.

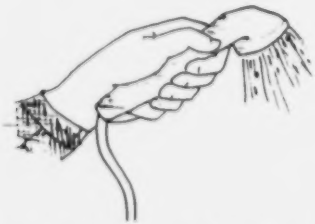
Extended sponges come in a variety of lengths and shapes. Children who have limited reaching or balancing skills can use them to wash their feet, back, and other distant body parts.

This extended sponge can be attached to the child's hand when grasp is limited. Velcro, shoelaces, or ponytail ties can be used to keep the sponge handle on the child's hand.

Inexpensive dishpan sponges also are useful in the bathtub.

Children who have problems with balance or coordination sometimes drop the soap and then are not be able to retrieve it. Soap-on-a-rope is ideal for these children. It also is useful for those who have grasping and holding problems.

Remove the cap from the shampoo tube before bathtime, or use squeeze-bottles for shampoo. Squeeze-bottles also are useful for liquid soap.



An extended shower hose is helpful for rinsing the child's head, body, and chair after shampooing.

Manufacturers

A-Plus
P.O. Box 2975
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

Century Products, Inc.
1366 Commerce Drive
Stowe, OH 44224

Fisher-Price, Inc.
P.O. Box 85038X
Drawer 25375p Dallas, TX 75285

Ortho-Kinetic, Inc.
P.O. Box 436
Waukesha, WI 53187

Sanitoy Co.
Finchburg, MA 01420

Sassi
191 Waukegan Road
Northfield, IL 60093

Some Distributors

J. A. Preston Corp.
60 Page Road
Clifton, NJ 07012

Fred Sammons, Inc.
Box 32
Brookfield, IL 60513-0032

Special Considerations for Your Child

Therapy Skill Builders
A division of
Communication Skill Builders
3830 E. Bellevue/P.O. Box 42050
Tucson, Arizona 85733/(602) 323-7500

Item #6085

ISBN 0-88450-204-X
Catalog No. 7474
Printed in the U.S.A.

Therapy Skill Builders
A division of
Communication Skill Builders
3830 E. Bellevue/P.O. Box 42050
Tucson, Arizona 85733/(602) 323-7500

Reorder Card

Here's your chance to order additional brochures. Take a minute to fill out this card and send it in.

You'll have the information you need on hand—ready to share with parents and caregivers. Choose the topic that serves your caseload the best.

Price Information

Qty.	Price Each	TOTAL
50	$1.00	$50.00
40	1.10	44.00
30	1.15	34.50
20	1.20	24.00
10 (min.)	1.25	12.50

Order quantities of 10 of any brochure . . . and you'll pay the discount price for the total number of brochures you order!

Ship to: _____

_____

_____

☐ Please check here if this is a permanent address change.
What was your previous zip code? _____

Telephone No. _____
☐ work ☐ home

Payment options:
☐ Personal check included. Add 10% for shipping and handling.
☐ School/Hospital/Clinic purchase order enclosed. Add 10% for shipping and handling.
☐ Charge to my credit card. Add 10% for shipping and handling.
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card No. _____

Expiration Date: Mo. _____ Yr. _____

Signature _____

Qty.	Item #	Title	Amount
	#7474-Y	**Bathing Techniques for Children Who Have Cerebral Palsy**	
		Also available—	
	#4109-Y	**Writing Techniques and Adaptations for Home and Classroom**	
	#7484-Y	**Feeding Techniques for Children Who Have Cleft Lip and Palate**	
	#7430-Y	**Dressing Techniques for Children Who Have Cerebral Palsy**	
	#4139-Y	**Swallowing Disorders: What Families Should Know**	
Please add 10% for shipping and handling (Arizona residents add sales tax.)			
		TOTAL	

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE
All materials are sent to you with our 90-day guarantee. If for any reason you're not completely satisfied with your order, return it for a full refund of the entire purchase price!

IN A HURRY?
Call (602) 323-7500 with your credit card or purchase order 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. MST Voice or TTY

We occasionally backorder items temporarily out of stock. If you do not accept backorders, please advise on your purchase order or on this form.